about 700 Indian fishermen, including from Kerala, are in Pakistan's custody. Nationality of 266 of these fishermen, who were granted consular access in March, 2004, has been confirmed. Consular access for the others has been sought.

Government, through diplomatic channels, have been consistently taking up the matter of early release and repatriation of the Indian fishermen with Pakistan. The issue was also raised during the meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries in New Delhi on September 5-6,2004; and again during the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi on November 23-24,2004.

Assistance to Iraq

740. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of aid in cash and kind so far provided by Government for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq after the cessation of war between the Iraqi and coalition forces under US;

(b) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to provide more assistance for the purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHMMED): (a) to (c) The Government has committed US $20 million for assistance to Iraqi people towards relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. Out of this, US $ 1.18 million was spent on distribution of milk powder to Iraqi children, an eight-week training programme for Iraqi diplomats was organized in New Delhi at the Foreign Service Institute. Another training programme for Iraqi officials in Information Technology was conducted at the National Institute of Information Technology. 125 slots for training in India are made available to Iraq per annum under the ITEC programme of the Government. Further, 50 scholarships for higher education are made available to Iraqis every year. The Government plans to run a pediatric and maternity hospital in Najaf and to train Iraqi officials in upstream and downstream units in oil sector.

Further, the Government has committed an additional amount of US $ 10 million to the two Iraqi Trust Funds to be administered under the aegis

of UN and the World Bank. As part of this, US$ 5 million has been remitted to the two Trust Funds. The balance amount is to be remitted within the current year.

Visit of Myanmar's Head of State to India

741. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gen. Than Shwe, Myanmar's Head of State has recently visited our country and held discussion;

(b) if so, the details of the discussion;

(c) whether any agreement had been signed with that country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) During his visit, Senior General Than Shwe held wide-ranging talks with the Hon'ble Prime Minister on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest and concern. The areas of discussion included economic development of the India-Myanmar border region through cooperation in various infrastructure projects; measures for enhancing bilateral trade; increasing people-to-peopie contacts through cultural and educational exchanges; cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues and energy sector.

(c) Yes Sir.

(d) Three Agreements were signed during the visit, namely (i) Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Non-Traditional Security Issues; (ii) Memorandum of Understanding on the Tamanthi Hydroelectric Power Project in Myanmar; and (iii) Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2004-06.

Policy to deal with hostage crisis

742. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have not evolved any official policy on how to deal with the hostage situations despite the fact that a